

Governor Carney Announces State Assistance to Resume Delaware Autism Program (DAP) Services

Assistance will lift suspension of respite services provided for Delaware families

WILMINGTON, Del. – Governor John Carney on Tuesday announced new state assistance for the Delaware Autism Program that will allow the Christina School District to continue providing respite services for Delaware families in need.

Christina School District – which operates the statewide program – also is agreeing to additional state oversight of the district’s administration of the program. That includes participation in a working group that will make recommendations on the future of the program and the services offered to Delaware families.

“We have heard from Delaware families and members of the General Assembly about the hardship created by Christina School District’s unexpected suspension of the respite program,” said **Governor Carney**. “On Monday, members of my team met with Christina Superintendent Rick Gregg and Chief Financial Officer Bob Silber, who requested immediate state assistance to lift the suspension. In coordination with members of the General Assembly, we have reached an agreement to fund the program, lift the suspension of family services, and closely monitor Christina’s ongoing management of the program. We need to step up for these families who need our

help. That's simply the right thing to do."

State assistance will allow the DAP respite care program to serve students with autism and their families under the existing program guidelines. The state will coordinate on a funding strategy for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2020. As a condition, Christina School District will agree to a reporting structure on monthly service hours provided through the respite program and agree to participate in a workgroup that will study and make recommendations on the program's operations.

The workgroup, led by the Delaware Department of Education, will include representatives of Autism Delaware, families, respite providers, districts, the Office of Management and Budget, the Controller General's Office, the Department of Health and Social Services, and members of the General Assembly. The working group will make recommendations on the future of the program, including the services offered for Delaware families and payment structures for providers.